

by his relatives, about three years since, and was a patient at Westminster Hospital for a wound in the head, attended with delirium, and afterwards erysipelas; but since recovery had usually enjoyed very good health, and been free from any cerebral symptoms, or other disorder.—*Lancet*, Feb. 24, 1849.

CASE II.—Dr. BARRIER, surgeon to the Hôtel Dieu, of Lyons, in a letter to *L'Union Médicale*, gives the details of a fatal case from the inhalation of chloroform. The subject was a boy, seventeen years of age, employed in a mining district, and admitted into the hospital for caries and necrosis of the middle finger of the right hand. The removal of the finger was resolved upon, and as the boy seemed to enjoy pretty good health, no counter-indication to the use of chloroform was discernible. A very thin compress was placed on the face, and the anæsthetic liquid gradually dropped on it. In four or five minutes, the patient was still speaking, and conscious of pain; a minute afterwards, he spoke again, and showed a little agitation. By this time, from one drachm and a half to two drachms of chloroform had been poured on the lint, and it is to be supposed that a great deal of it went off by evaporation. The pulse had all the while been perfectly normal. All at once, the patient rose suddenly, and threw about his limbs, but he was soon brought down again by the assistants. This excitement did not altogether last more than a quarter of a minute, when it was found that the artery at the wrist had ceased beating. The cloth was immediately taken off from the face, which looked very haggard. The heart ceased to beat, and no pulse could be detected; respiration was, however, still carried on, but soon became weak, slow, and ceased completely in about half a minute. On the employment of very energetic restorative means, the breathing began again, with a certain amount of vigour; the pulse, however, could not be felt. The frictions were continued with renewed vigour, but the respiration soon ceased again, and half an hour's constant exertions remained utterly useless. The inspection of the body, from peculiar circumstances, was not made until seventy-two hours after death. The stomach contained about eleven drachms of a thick fluid, presenting a purple colour: this organ, as well as the rest of the alimentary canal, was distended with gas. The heart, of the usual size, much compressed and fallen in, contained neither air nor blood. The parietes of the organ presented only a little red froth, as if the blood had been much agitated by the carneæ columnæ. The venæ cavæ and the venæ portæ were filled with black and fluid blood. On the Eustachian valve there was a fibrinous clot weighing about one drachm; this was the only clot which was found in the heart or great vessels, and these organs were opened with such care, that it remains quite certain that no appreciable quantity of air was contained in them. The lungs were very much collapsed when the thorax was opened; they are of a very deep slatey colour, and the same colour is presented on a section being made: the texture of these organs is, however, healthy. The larynx and trachea presented no lesion, and the brain was perfectly normal; the sinuses containing rather a large quantity of non-coagulated black blood.—*Ib.*

CASE III.—The *Glasgow Herald* states that recently a young gentleman returned from Australia to visit his relatives in the neighbourhood of Govan, but before leaving the colony he met with a slight accident in the foot, which being, perhaps, neglected during the passage home, caused the great toe-nail to grow into the flesh. To remove the pain and inconvenience, the gentleman resolved to submit to an operation; which a respectable surgeon in Govan was employed to perform on Tuesday last. Preparatory to doing so, the surgeon resolved to make use of chloroform; but the patient, after inhaling the gas, almost instantly expired. An investigation of the affair is in progress.—*Lond. Med. Gaz.*, Jan. 1849.

73. *Chloride of Olefiant Gas as an Anæsthetic*.—Mr. NUNNELEY, of Leeds, proposes the chloride of olefiant gas, (Dutch liquid, chloride of acetyl,) as possessing all the good qualities of chloroform, and as being the least irritating of any anæsthetic agent which he has tried. He says that he has tried it upon many dogs and rats, young and old, in large and small doses; in no one instance has he seen any irritation caused by it, nor any repugnance to its inhalation. The animal quickly and pleasantly passes into a profound state of insensibility, and remains so. He states, that a more death-like condition is

recovered from than after chloroform, and in every instance the animals have quickly rallied and remained well, except in one where he intentionally destroyed it to observe the *post-mortem* appearances. Having ascertained the effects upon animals, he inhaled it himself, and found the action not only not disagreeable, but perfectly agreeable in every respect. His assistant, Mr. Beaumont, has taken it once, and his pupil, Mr. Morham, has taken it twice, on two successive evenings; both were rendered as insensible as is either necessary or safe for the performance of any operation whatever, or by whatever agent induced. In neither was there the least irritation; in fact both begged for more before becoming insensible, and when rallying from this condition, and both were immediately well. The latter of the two, who has three times inhaled chloroform, declares the effect of the Dutch oil, both at the time of inhaling and subsequently, to be far more pleasant than that of chloroform. He gave the Dutch oil to four gentlemen: in all it answered admirably, all had previously taken chloroform, and they were unanimous in declaring the oil to be more effectual, pleasant, and speedy, with less uncomfortable feelings afterwards.—*Prov. Med. and Surg. Journ.*, March 7.

Last year, Prof. SIMPSON experimented with this same article, and was the first, we believe, to use it as an anæsthetic, but he was not satisfied with its effects.

74. *Naphtha as an Anæsthetic.*—Prof. SIMPSON has been latterly experimenting upon light coal tar naphtha as an anæsthetic. It is as powerful as chloroform, but not so pleasant to inhale, and its only advantage is its cheapness. Prof. Simpson believes that the active anæsthetic constituent is benzole.

75. *Anæsthesia from the local Application of Chloroform.*—Mr. HIGGINSON communicated to the Liverpool Medical and Pathological Society, the case of a lady, aged 25 years, in labour with her first child: the perineum had long been on the stretch by the head, which was tumefied by the pressure: the pain was great with each uterine contraction, but was referred entirely to the perineum, no pain being apparently felt from the uterine contraction itself.

About half a drachm of chloroform was poured upon a handkerchief in the ordinary manner, but instead of being applied to the mouth, it was held in almost immediate contact with the perineum. The pain immediately ceased, though the uterine contractions continued in full force; and the first intimation the patient had of the progress of the labour, was hearing the child cry. Her mind was not at all affected, nor was intellectual consciousness in any degree diminished.

He had observed the same thing, though in a less degree, when the chloroform had been applied to the sacrum in another case.

He had also applied this agent to the os uteri of a patient suffering from very severe dysmenorrhœa, by means of a sponge placed in a curved glass speculum, which was introduced into the vagina. The pain almost immediately abated, and on its return, after some hours, the patient re-applied it herself with similar benefit.

Dr. WATSON mentioned some cases confirmatory of its good effects when locally applied. He had painted it over a swelled testicle, with speedy relief to the pain, and had applied it along the course of the spine with a similar result in a case of acute spinal tenderness, which had not been relieved by other treatment. He had also applied it to the surface of a large mammary abscess prior to opening it, which was afterwards done without suffering to the patient; and also to the vulva of a woman before cauterizing the orifice of the urethra. It had relieved the cramp and collapse in a case of English cholera, when laid upon the epigastrium, and had abated the pain almost immediately when painted round the edge of a surface to which potassa fusa had been applied for the purpose of forming an issue.—*Lond. Med. Gaz.*, Jan. 1849.

76. *Chloroform in Midwifery.*—The Westminster Medical Society has been occupied during its last three sittings with a discussion on the above important subject. Unusual interest was excited by the occasion, the Society's rooms being nightly crowded with fellows and visitors.